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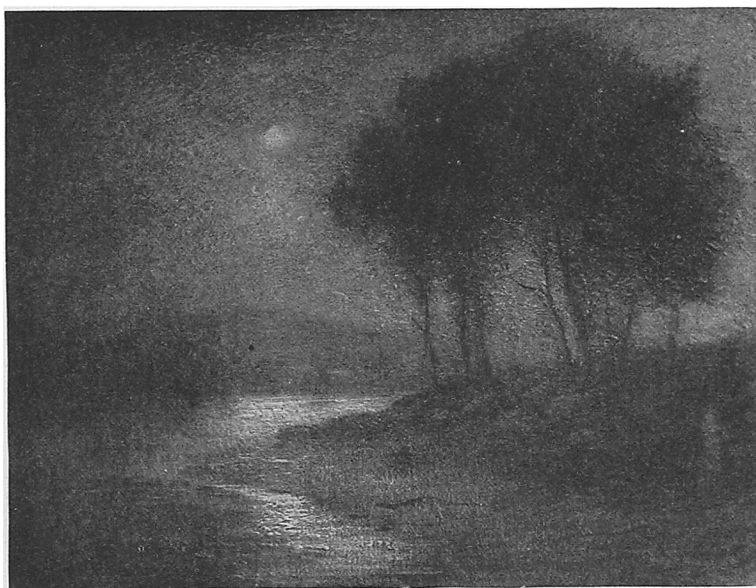
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*HILLSIDE IN AUTUMN*  
*By J. Francis Murphy*

—*Courtesy American Art Gallery, Chicago*



*SILVERY MOONLIGHT*  
By George Bogert

—Courtesy American Art Gallery, Chicago

## A Collection of American Masterpieces

By EVELYN MARIE STUART

**A**MONG the rare treasures of Chicago galleries are three canvases by George Inness, on exhibition at the American Art Gallery in the Postal Telegraph Building. Really fine examples of the best work of this greatest of all American landscape painters are not so commonly to be found on the market that they should escape notice or comment. The three examples at the American Gallery cover as many periods of the master's technical development which naturally adds to their interest.

"The Red Sunset" is the earliest of the three and belongs to the latter part of his middle period. "Edge of the Woods" belongs to his very last period having been painted in the nineties. The small canvas showing a group of cattle may be one of his Tarpon Springs pictures as there are many things therein

which would incline one so to believe. This is more of a cattle picture than is usual with Inness. The greyish white cow in the foreground is carefully painted with much effect of sleekness. The further members of the herd are more broadly indicated and the condition of all of them would suggest just such a rich grass country as that of this part of the south. The picture is full of soft greens that denote plenty of sun and abundant moisture. On the lazy little creek at the back are two old boats and some careless figures with touches of gay color about the neck and head. The red sunset is reflected in the stagnant meadow pool and a grey weather-bleached log, denuded of its bark and resembling a skeleton, is seen in the middleground as in so many of Inness' pictures. These logs always recall somehow the tragedies of trees, felled



*THE RED SUNSET*  
By George Inness

—Courtesy American Art Gallery, Chicago

by lightning or ignominiously destroyed by worms.

"The Red Sunset" has been mentioned in these pages before and is now presented in the illustration herewith. Some idea of its beauty may be gained from the black and white, the peculiar ascending sun ray, the circle of floating clouds with their suggestion of distance both from the earth and from the higher heavens being, if anything, emphasized in the reproduction. The drifting forward of rosy mists, and the witchery and wonder of colors however, add to these charms a grace that is little less than divine.

In greater measure than the works of any other artist do those of Inness make us feel the presence of God in nature. Verily, he has mixed his pigments with Swedenborgian theology and painted into his pictures the tenet of a faith that holds that God alone lives and the life of the earth itself is but the Divine Presence existing in individuals, trees, plants, stones, the waters, air and sky. "Sunset" is a psalm of praise to the majesty and glory of the Lord. "Edge of the Woods" is a prayer of faith and utter contentment from one who

feels himself approaching the realm of the spirit.

This picture is full of the mystery and mellow atmosphere that make up the fascination of Inness' late works. The composition is exceedingly simple and the objects are often merely indicated as though forms were important but for the purpose of reflection. Yet we feel the impression of life in the little fire of leaves and brush with its wisp of smoke, and the figure of a child at one side and an older person back of the blaze. The foreground has Inness' peculiar transparent mingling of tones, elusive and subtle, yet infinitely suggestive.

A Keith in this collection reminds one of the oft repeated story of the intimacy between these two artists and the persistent suggestion that the methods of Inness affected the style of Keith. It would indeed, seem possible that the association should have had its effect upon the younger man, and yet it is equally probable that Keith had been working along the same lines before the two ever met. Both were in the spirit of their time and naturally absorbed in solving the same problems, prob-



*GOLDEN AUTUMN*  
By William Keith

—Courtesy American Art Gallery, Chicago

lems to which the history of painting up to their day had naturally delivered them.

The Keith is a golden autumn picture of a California landscape, beneath a sunset sky with little clouds floating in a sea of gold. The woods seem scrambled in, with wide strokes that are almost crude upon close observation, but tremendously effective at a proper perspective. The picture is clear and open with light effects that are marvelous, reflected from sky to pool. We do not wonder that Keith should have been called "The Inness of the West" for it could not be believed that the intricate effects which appear at a distance could have been achieved with the careless touches that close examination reveals. The cattle at the edge of the pool seem absolutely true in form and full of vitality as one views the picture from afar. Minute examination reveals them as mere daubs of pigment and genius. "Near San Raphael" is a luminous and beautiful work in any degree of light

or shadow that may be cast upon it. It possesses, too, a bigness that makes one forget that it is after all rather a small canvas.

A modern, who seems much in tune with the older school of Inness and Keith, is George Bogert, who, like them, is a master of mystery and of tone. His works have the fat pigmentation of the modern school but they are lower in key and mellower in tone than those of the majority of moderns. "The Crescent Moon," on exhibition at the American Gallery, is a large and most important Bogert in his characteristic style. The sky is veiled with little broken clouds amidst which peep out faintly the horns of a little young moon. Beneath lies a lonely landscape of rough banks of rock and earth between which a grassy, reedy stream creeps sluggishly along. We are looking up its course to a waterfall, which appears as a mere thread of blue and there are blue mountains further away in the background. The sun has gone behind the distant



WINTER, MONHEGAN  
ISLAND  
By William Ritschel

—Courtesy American Art  
Gallery, Chicago

blue of these hills but we feel its parting glow in the faint tinges of rose on the little floating clouds. The stream is leaden and grey with undertones of blue and there is a little grey in the grasses and earth where they emerge from the shadow.

Varying quantities of light and different degrees of distance bring out in this picture details of mass and effects of luminosity that are fascinating. At close range one may hardly distinguish the forms of rocks and earth masses, with a proper perspective they emerge mysteriously but clearly from the subtle shadows. In its dull color and poetic quality this picture is eloquent of much that was best in the older school and of the influence of France.

In "Silvery Moonlight" we have almost a monotone of soft, greenish grey blue, very carefully worked with an enamel-like depth of pigment. The feathery trees are of a brownish hue, yet overlaid with the blue of the moonlight. The silvery moon is reflected in the calm tide and across the water shine out the tiny rosy lights of cottages on the opposite bank. These are discerned but dimly in the mysterious light of this harmonious nocturne.

Another of the treasures of this gallery is a J. Francis Murphy entitled "Hillside in

Autumn." It is beautiful with his characteristic greens and golds and frost-touched woods. An unusual arrangement is to be noted in the tall whippy trees, rather stiffly set as though in an arbor, at one side of the picture. Over the hill we see a cluster of farm buildings and the longer we gaze on this picture the more we find ourselves under the spell of that peculiar poetic quality which constitutes the great charm of a Murphy.

For strong contrast we turn to William Ritschel, whose "Winter, Monhegan Island" with its tossing surf and cold grey rocks is as wild and lonely a creation as one could imagine. This scene is off the coast of an island seventeen miles from the mainland and it suggests the isolation of winter in such a locality. This artist most often paints the sea in winter and always most successfully. His cold and wild and stormy waters seem fitting for some conflict of soul. There are little touches of emerald green and bright brown amid the rocks in this picture which relieves the grey agreeably.

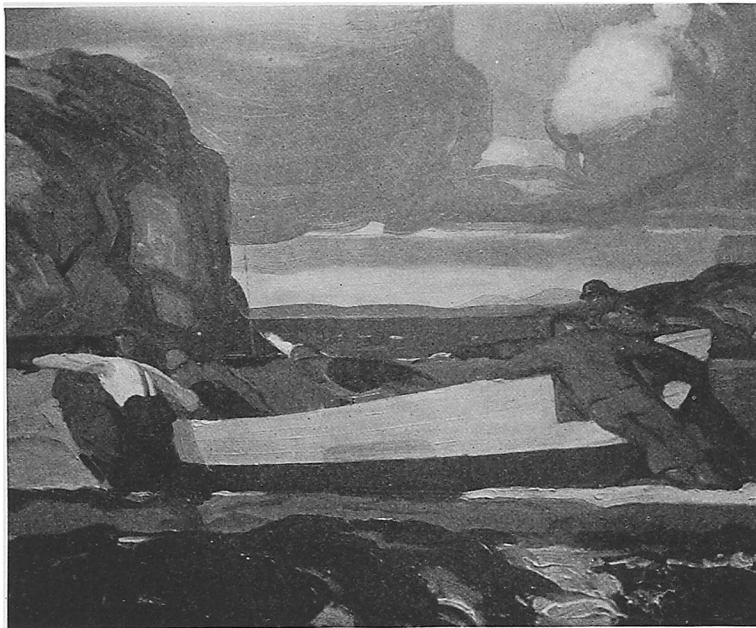
The smaller picture evidently painted at "Carmel," takes us across the continent and to the sunny clime of California but still gives us a grey picture. It has, however, a fine convincing outdoor quality in its every line and

hue, and more variety of color than we at first perceive. There are many soft yellow and brown tones among the rocks and the little lines of white upon the ripples add considerable sparkle.

Of quite another character are the marines of George Bellows, two of which are included in this collection. "Sunlit Surf" is full of wild wave action, spray and foam and the surge of violent seas. There are touches of Bellows' peculiar red light on the grey rocks and the color in general is quite unmistakably his own.

"The Big Dory" is full of vigorous action as the men tug and pull in the launching of the boat. The gay line of red along its body lights up the cold dark blues of sky and sea and the blackish tones of the rocks which compose the picture. Bellows is noted for vigorous action in his groups of people and this picture is a fine example of this quality at its best.

Altogether this collection at the American Art Gallery embraces much that is best in the older and newer schools of American art and is peculiarly well selected from the standpoint of variety of method and style.



*THE BIG DORY*  
By George Bellows

—Courtesy American Art Gallery, Chicago